

A bill (S. 3044) to provide energy price relief and hold oil companies and other entities accountable for their actions with regard to high energy prices, and for other purposes.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I object to any further proceedings with respect to these bills en bloc.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Objection having been heard, the bills will be placed on the calendar under rule XIV.

#### RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Republican leader is recognized.

#### BUDGET CONFERENCE REPORT

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, let me say to my good friend, the majority leader, we would be happy to work out a process by which we could have the debate on the budget today. We would even be prepared to have the vote on the budget today, but I understand that is problematic.

Mr. REID. I think we could probably do that.

Mr. MCCONNELL. Well, that is something we could probably work toward, yes.

Mr. President, with regard to the budget, we have our differences in the Senate, but there are a few ideas that have wide bipartisan agreement. One is we need to rein in Federal spending, and another is we need to do our part to ensure that middle-class families keep more of the money they earn.

But the Democrats' latest budget shows we have a very different view of what these ideas mean. Our friends on the other side said they wanted to raise taxes on the rich and keep taxes low for working families. But this budget would provide for the average family a tax hike of \$2,300 on people earning as little as \$31,000 a year and couples making \$63,000 a year. For a little perspective, first year schoolteachers in my hometown earn \$35,982, and I do not think they consider themselves rich.

With rising gas prices and economic concerns, middle-class families are tightening their belts. Yet this budget would take more money out of the paychecks of these families to fill the Government's coffers. At a time when all Americans are watching their spending, shouldn't Washington be doing the same?

Not according to this budget, which does nothing to address entitlement spending and sets a new record—a new record—for nonemergency spending, topping the \$1 trillion mark for the first time in American history. That is not a record I think we should be welcoming.

So I am a little confused as to why this budget is at odds with the Democrats' promise of keeping taxes low for working families and putting a stop to wasteful Washington spending.

It seems to me, if Congress was serious about letting Americans keep more of the money they earn, we would make tax relief permanent. If we were serious about reining in spending, we would pass a budget that calls for responsible growth. Instead, we are on the verge of passing a budget that goes in the opposite direction, contains the largest tax hike in U.S. history, and sets a new record for spending.

American families cannot afford this budget, American job creators cannot afford this budget, and our economy cannot afford this budget. I urge all of our colleagues to protect the American family's budget by voting against this budget when we have an opportunity to do that.

I yield the floor.

#### RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the leadership time is reserved.

#### MORNING BUSINESS

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the Senate will proceed to a period of morning business, with Senators permitted to speak for up to 10 minutes each, with the majority controlling the first 30 minutes, and the Republicans controlling the next 30 minutes, with the time from 11 a.m. until 12 noon reserved for Senators to make tributes to former President Lyndon B. Johnson, and the time equally divided and controlled between the two leaders or their designees.

The Senator from Michigan is recognized.

Ms. STABENOW. Thank you, Mr. President.

#### SUPPLEMENTAL APPROPRIATIONS

Ms. STABENOW. Mr. President, I rise today to speak about two items that are in the supplemental that has come from the House of Representatives. I find it difficult to speak about either one, but particularly the first one, without turning and looking behind me to see the great champion of the Senate, Senator TED KENNEDY, leading this debate and discussion.

The first item I want to talk about is how we help middle-class families, working families who have lost their jobs, to be able to keep their home, their dignity, and put food on the table while they look for that next job.

No one has been a greater champion—no one—in this body or anywhere in the country for working men and women, for folks who are working hard every day to meet the American dream, than our own Senator TED KENNEDY.

So as I speak today, I want to send my wishes, as my colleagues have—all of my colleagues from both sides of the aisle and every part of this building

and this city—to say to TED that we miss you and we need you back and we are sending our love and our prayers to you and Vicki and the entire family because we need you. While we are very saddened about the news, we know—as you have championed and had such great courage in fighting for those who have needed a voice, who have needed a champion in the Senate—we know you will fight with the same vigor, and we will be right there with you to do everything we can to make sure you are back leading us, leading the charge.

I have stood on this floor many times with the great leader, the great Senator from Massachusetts, to talk about what is happening to families all across America. I represent a State with the highest unemployment rate in the country. Those in Michigan who are seeing their unemployment benefits expire, who are valiantly looking for work every day, have been looking to us to help them extend that insurance benefit until they can find a job.

We know there are 7.7 million people looking for work right now and competing for about 4 million jobs. So I am proud of the fact that our caucus, the Democratic caucus, has placed creating jobs at the top of the list of the budget resolution we will be discussing and voting on this week.

But in the meantime we have to do everything we can to support those families. In the supplemental that has come over from the House, I am very pleased they have included a greatly needed extension of unemployment insurance benefits because the reality is we have lost, since January, 260,000 good-paying American jobs, 260,000 middle-class jobs—the jobs that pay the mortgage, put food on the table, send the kids to college, buy clothing, pay for gas—which continues to grow outrageously higher every day.

Part of our responsibility is to make sure those families receive the insurance benefits they need while they pick up their lives, move in a new direction, find work, so they can continue to have the American dream.

Some of those families have members who are in Iraq or Afghanistan or around the world serving us right now. Unfortunately, we have too many families where one person—while we are grateful—is serving us in our armed services and the other breadwinner in the family has, in fact, lost their job. So there is a direct relationship between what we are doing to support the unemployed to be able to continue to look for work and to be able to care for their families in the meantime and what we are doing on this supplemental.

Mr. President, there is another incredibly important piece of supporting our troops that is in this legislation coming over from the House of Representatives. Again, I hear the voice of Senator KENNEDY championing this as well in terms of making sure we are doing everything possible for our troops, both when they are in harm's